

**Senate Economics Legislation Committee**  
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

**Treasury Portfolio**

Supplementary Budget Estimates

2016 - 2017

**Division/Agency:** Australian Competition and Consumer Commission

**Question No:** 115

**Topic:** Staffing Numbers

**Reference:** Written

**Senator:** Ketter, Chris

**Question:**

- 1) In your latest annual report the ACCC says “in the first half of 2014 we... reduced our staff numbers to match available funding”. How many jobs were cut at the ACCC?
- 2) In which sections of the ACCC did these cuts predominantly fall?
- 3) How does the ACCC decide which investigations it should prioritise?
- 4) Logically, then, the ACCC will be undertaking fewer investigations of anti-competitive and anti-consumer conduct because of its reduced staffing levels, correct?
- 5) What areas of anti-competitive and anti-consumer conduct are less likely to be investigated because of the staffing cuts at the ACCC?
- 6) How much money was saved from these staffing cuts?

**Answer:**

- 1) The number of redundancies during the 2013-14 financial year was 95.
- 2) The following table displays the number of redundancies in each relevant division of the ACCC and AER.

<b>Division</b>	<b>Redundancies</b>	<b>%</b>
Enforcement	23	24.2%
Consumer, Small Business and Product Safety	23	24.2%
Infrastructure Regulation Division	15	15.8%
Corporate Services	12	12.6%
Australian Energy Regulator	9	9.5%
Mergers and Adjudication	8	8.4%
Legal and Economic	5	5.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>100%</b>

- 3) The ACCC prioritises its compliance and enforcement activities in line with the ACCC Compliance and Enforcement Policy. The Compliance and Enforcement Policy identifies current priority areas and lists the priority factors to be taken into account in deciding whether to pursue particular issues or matters.
- 4) With less investigators it follows that, all other things equal, the ACCC would be able to undertake less investigations. Prioritisation under its Compliance and Enforcement Policy is therefore very important. Accordingly, the ACCC shifts resources to maximise the enforcement outcomes we can achieve under our established priorities.

The ACCC can and does adjust its approach to investigations and enforcement in light of available resources by determining the breadth and depth it might pursue issues in respect to particular traders or within an industry or area of conduct. Applying these levers, it is not necessarily the case that the ACCC will pursue less enforcement outcomes.

- 5) As noted above, it can be expected that the ACCC will direct the majority of its investigation and enforcement resources to priority areas identified in the Compliance and Enforcement Policy.
- 6) The estimated savings from employee costs generated by these redundancies was approximately \$10.3m.